



## State of Connecticut

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
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Good morning Chairmen LeBeau and Perone, and Ranking Members Frantz and Lavielle, and members of the Commerce Committee. I am here to express my support for H.B 6267 *An Act Concerning The Redevelopment of the Norwich State Hospital Property*.

We all know that the economy has taken a significant toll on our state's two casinos. And, the outlook looks even bleaker, as neighboring states look to develop casinos of their own, as economic drivers and tax revenue generators. The eastern part of the state could be facing more bad news, depending on what the federal government decides to do with our military budget.

What happens in those two areas has a great impact on jobs and the economy in the southeastern region of the state. A wrong turn could be devastating.

The Norwich Hospital property has been vacant for about 17 years and it presents an opportunity that could help guard against future downturns. The bulk of the property – 390 acres – is located in the Town of Preston and is now known as the Preston Riverwalk. This is an asset with infrastructure, views, and proximity to tourist attractions, including the casinos.

As a state, we have shown an amazing ability to move quickly on economic development projects when we want to...when we make something a priority and commit to it. We have spent hundreds of millions (close to a billion dollars) trying to lure and keep large, self-sustaining companies here in the state. To date, I believe the state has spent less than \$5 million to redevelop Preston Riverwalk.

The state should feel an obligation to clean up the mess it created over the decades of the last century. I believe that what is needed is an all-in commitment from the state to do what needs to be done to remediate and prepare the property so that the redevelopment project can move forward as soon as possible.

The House Republican Caucus put forth this proposal in hopes of reviving a partnership between the state and the Town of Preston and the City of Norwich and the southeastern region of Connecticut. A commitment from the state would give the town some security and predictability to allow them to make decisions about how to move forward.

Thank you for your consideration.